

“CHINESE SECRET SOCIETIES.”

PART II.

BY W. A. PICKERING.

Read at a Meeting of the Society held on the 9th June 1879.

Having in the first number of this Journal, given an account of the origin and establishment of the “Hung League” or Thien-Te-Hui, I will now describe an initiatory ceremony, as actually witnessed by myself and others, in the best disciplined Lodge in Singapore, and which lasted from 10 p. m. to 3 a. m., during which period some seventy new Members were admitted into the Society.

As I have neither the time to re-translate in full, nor the ability to improve on M. Schlegel’s version of the ritual, I shall describe the ceremonies and furniture of a Lodge, as I myself have seen them in Singapore; merely translating such portions as may seem necessary for my purpose, and, at times, taking the liberty of quoting from the “Hung (or Ang*) League.”

Any reader wishing to become more minutely acquainted with the Thien-Te-Hui, should procure M. Schlegel’s book, in which he will find a graphic description of the working, rules, and ceremonies of the Society, as (from all I hear) it now exists in China, and in semi-civilised Countries, where Chinese Colonists are compelled to combine against the unscrupulous and capricious tyranny of Native rulers.

In the Straits Settlements, the secret Societies are in fact, but large Friendly Societies, without political objects; dangerous no doubt, to a certain extent, but only for the reason that, owing to the nature of our Chinese population, each Hoey contains a large proportion of lawless and unprincipled characters.

* In this paper I shall pronounce this word and all Chinese names according to the Hokken dialect.

Theoretically, all Meetings of the "League," are held in the jungle or mountains, and every new member is instructed to reply, when asked where he was initiated, "In the mountains, for fear of the 'Chheng' Officials."

In the British Colony of the Straits Settlements, however, each Lodge has a substantial "Hui-Koan" (1) or Meeting-house; and at Singapore, the Grand Lodge possesses a very superior building at Rochore, where, twice a year, (on the 25th of the 1st and on the 25th of the 7th moons) the "five ancestors"* (2) are worshipped, and feasts, with theatricals, are held in their honour, by the following nine branches of the "Ghee Hin" Society:—

- 1 Hok-Kien Ghee Hin, (3)
- 2 Hok-Hin, (4)
- 3 Tie-Kun Ghee Hin, (5)
- 4 Kwong Hok or Ghee Khee. (6)
- 5 Siong-Peh-Koan, (7)
- 6 Kwang-Hui-Siau, (8)
- 7 Ghee Sin, (9)
- 8 Ghee Hok, (10)
- 9 Hailam Ghee Hin, (11)

For many years there has been no "Toa-Ko" (12) or Grand Master of the Ghee Hin Society, as no person dare come forward to undertake the onerous and responsible duties of the office, but each of the Branches is managed and governed by the following office bearers:—

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|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Tsong-Li (13) | or General Manager. |
| 1 Sien-Seng (14) | or Master of Lodge. |
| 1 Sien-Hong (15) | or Van-guard. |
| 1 Ang-Kun (16) | Red Bâton or Executioner. |
- and a varying number of Tsam-Hoa, (17) or Councillors, and Thih-pan Chhau-oe, ¶ (18) or District Head men, who carry out the orders of the superiors:—

* The five priests O-tek-te, Png-tai-ang, Chhoa tek-tiong, Ma-Chiau-hin and Li-sek-khai, who escaped from the burning of the Siau-Lim monastery.

¶ Iron planks, Grass-shoes.

1 會館	7 松栢館	13 總理
2 五祖	8 廣惠肇	14 先生
3 福建義興	9 義信	15 先鋒
4 福興	10 義福	16 紅棍
5 潮郡義興	11 瓊州館義興	17 簪花
6 廣福義氣	12 大哥	18 鐵板草鞋

I. THE LODGE AND ITS FURNITURE.

The accompanying lithograph, taken from a native sketch, gives a very good idea of a Lodge arranged for a ceremony of initiation.

Just inside the outer door of the Lodge is the famous Ang-Kun, (19) or Red Bâton, (a staff of 36 Chinese inches in length) which is used as an instrument of punishment, and from which one of the office-bearers derives his title.

So-Ang-Kuang (20) is on guard at the outer door, and any person wishing to enter the Lodge, must take up the Bâton with both hands, and repeat the following verse.

"In my hands I hold the red cane,
 "On my way to the Lodge I've no fear,
 "You ask me brother, whither I go,
 "You come early, but I walked slow."

Any stranger failing in this test, ought, according to the rules of the Society, to be beheaded at once.

Having gained entry, we come to the Ang Gate*(21) guarded on the right by Ban-To-hong (22) and on the left by Ban-To-liong (23).

Above the Gate, on each side, is a Flag, the two together bearing characters meaning, "The barriers are open, the way is clear"(24), and on the lintels is the couplet;

"Situate in the Ko range, where the Khé hills have branched forth for ages.*

"The Gate looks towards the great Ocean, into which the united waters of the" three rivers,† have flowed during myriads of years.

The next stage, is the "Hall of Sincerity and Justice," (25) guarded by Te^u-Ki-iu (26) on the right, and Tan-Teng-Seng (27) on the left. The two flags above, have the inscription, "Dissipate revenge, and put away all malice"(28). There is also on each side, a horizontal sentence, "Two dragons disputing over a Pearl,"(29) and "Overturn the "Chheng restore the Beng" on

On the door-posts is the antithetic couplet:—

"Though a man be not a relation, if he be just, he is worthy of all honour.

"A friend, if he be found destitute of honour, ought to be repudiated."

The next step takes us to the "City of Willows,"(30) at

* Ko-Khé is the name of the Temple where the 5 priests found a refuge.

† Sam Ho.

19 紅棍	22 萬道芳	25 忠義堂	28 消冤解
20 蘇紅光	23 萬道龍	26 鄭其由	29 二龍爭仇
21 洪門	24 關開路現	27 陳定成	30 木楊城珠

the East Gate of which, Go-Kim-lai, (31) and Go-Hoan-ji (32) are the guardians. Practically, there is only one Gate represented in the Singapore Lodges, but theoretically, the city has a Gate at each point of the compass, guarded respectively by the ancient heroes,* Han-peng, (33) Han-Hok, (34) Teⁿ-Chhan (35) and Li-chhang-kok, (36) whose flags adorn the City walls.

The couplet on the East Gate is,

“At the command of the General, the gate opens and myriads stream forth.

The awe-inspiring “Ang” heroes, guard the entrance to the “Willow City.”

Also the following.

“To the East, in the wood, it is difficult to walk quickly.

“The sun appearing above the hills, rises from the Eastern Ocean.

On the West Gate.

“In the metal road of the West, one must be careful.

“But of the two paths, the Western is more clear.

On the South Gate.

“The fiery South Road, is exceedingly hot.

Chang-Chiu, Chuan-Chiu, and Yen-ping, § extend their protection as far as the Southern Capital.

The couplet of the North Gate † is,

“The Northern waters are deep and hard to cross.

In Yun-nan and Sze-Chuan there is a way by which we can pass.”

Entering the East Gate of the “City of Willows,” we come to the “Red flowery Pavilion,” (37) before which Chiang Kiet-hin (38) dispenses the purifying waters of the Sam-Ho, (39) or three Rivers, to the new members.

Above the Pavilion is the Grand Altar, (40) with the pulpit of the Sien-Seng, or Master of the Lodge; and on the East side, is the “Circle of Heaven and Earth,” (41) with its couplet.

“Agitate Heaven and Earth, and reform the world.

“Let the “Beng” triumph, and let righteousness obtain throughout the Empire.

* See “Hung League” p. 21.

§ Prefectures of Hok-Kien,

† According to Chinese ideas the 4 cardinal points and the centre represent the 5 elements, viz: E. wood, W. metal, S. fire, N, water, centre, earth.

31 吳金來	34 韓福	37 紅花亭	40 壇
32 吳喚兒	35 鄭田國	38 蔣結典	41 乾坤圈
33 韓朋	36 李昌	39 三河	

Passing through the Circle, out of the West door of the "Pavilion," we reach the "Two Planked Bridge," guarded by the spirits of deceased brethren, "Kiet-Beng-pu"(42) and "Ban-Bun-beng,"*(43) whose "spirit throne"(44) or tablet, is on the left side of the bridge-head. On this tablet is the inscription.

"When will the day of vengeance arrive?"

Until then, we will cherish our resentment, though it be myriads of years.

The right hand plank of the Bridge is supposed to be of copper, and that on the left, of iron.

At the bridge-head is the couplet.

"Staggering across, we leave no traces behind.

"While all creation is silently expectant, seeing that the day is already beginning to be red-§

In the centre of the Bridge, underneath.

"A true prince will accomplish everything he takes in hand.

"A true man will bring to perfection all he undertakes to do.

On the Bridge, are hung, "Ang" (45) coin to the value of 30,821¶ cash, and underneath are three stepping-stones, arranged in a triangular figure, over which we pass to the "Fiery valley"(46) or "Red Furnace,"(47) guarded by a malignant though just spirit, called the "Red youth,"(48) who enviously scrutinises the hearts of all who approach him, and mercilessly slays all traitors with his spear, and consigns their souls to the flames.

According to the testimony of the Head men, many victims have fallen by his spear in Singapore.

Having passed scatheless through this ordeal, we arrive at the "Market of Universal Peace,"(49) and the "Temple of Virtue and Happiness,"(50) which are at the end of our dangerous journey.

In the market is Chia-pang-heng (51) who sells the precious "Ang" fruits, of five kinds, and in the Temple, besides the inscription already noticed on the "Spirit throne of deceased brethren," is the following couplet.

"In this happy place, if there be any impurity, the wind will cleanse it away.

* Kiet-Ban, the associated myriads.

§ (Ang 紅 red, and Ang 洪 the surname of the League.)

¶ The character ("Ang" 洪) is composed of the characters which can represent 3-8-21.

42 結明富	45 洪錢	48 紅孩子	51 謝邦行
43 萬文明	46 火坑	49 太平墟	
44 亡兄故弟神位	47 紅爐	50 福德寺	

“In this virtuous family there will be no trouble; the Sun will continually illumine the door.”

II. THE CEREMONY. ¶

In a room convenient to the Lodge, on the right of the “Market of Universal Peace,” the candidates having purified their bodies by ablution, and wearing clean clothes, are prepared for admission.

Each candidate must be introduced by an office-bearer, who is supposed to be responsible for him, that during four months, the new member (52) shall not even come to words with the brethren, and that for the term of three years, he shall not break the more important of the 36 articles of the Society’s Oath.

Experience however shows, that this obligation sits very lightly on both new members and Head-men, at any rate amongst the class which now-a-days composes the Societies.

Each candidate having paid a fee of \$3.50, (\$2 of which go to the treasury of the Lodge, while the balance is expended in fees to office-bearers, and in the expenses of the evening), his surname, name, age, place and hour of birth, are entered on the Register of the Society, and copied on a sheet of Red paper.

In token of having cast off all allegiance to the present dynasty “Chheng,” the “queue” of each is unbraided, and the hair allowed to flow loosely down the back, the right shoulder and breast are bared, and the candidate is not allowed to retain a single article on his person, except a jacket and short trousers.

In consideration of the poverty of most of the newcomers, they are not required to put on new clothes, but newly-washed raiment is insisted upon.

The Sien-Seng, Sien-Hong, Ang-Kun, and the Chhau-oes who act the parts of the Generals guarding the gates &c., must, however, dress in new clothes on every occasion.

After preparing the candidates, the Master proceeds to arrange the articles on the Grand altar, the most important part of this duty being the insertion of all the paraphernalia. in the “Peck measure,”* or Ang Tau.”(53) On the front

* Nearly always, though erroneously, spoken of as the Bushel. See “Hung League.” pp. 41 and 149 for an interesting description of this article.

¶ 先生開香 新丁入洪門

52 新客 53 紅斗

of the "Tau" are four characters, Plantain,(54) Taro,(55) Plum,(56) Orange.(57) Behind is the inscription, "The provisions in the Peck measure are Red (Ang)."

Inside the Tau, is placed a peck of rice, amongst which is deposited a red paper parcel, containing 108 of the "Ang" Cash,(58) and the whole is neatly covered with red paper, into which the Sien-Seng sticks the various articles and instruments, symbolical of the history and objects of the Thien-Te-Hui,* in the following order.

(1) The Flags of the "Five Ancestors," which are triangular; each containing the surname of one of the five priests, Chhoa-Tek-Tiong,(59) Png-Toa-Ang,(60) Ma-Chhiauh-Hin,(61) O-Tek-Té,(62) and Li-Sek-Khai;(63) and the name of the Province,—Fuh-Kien, Kwangtung, Yunnan, Hu-Kwang§, or Chekiang, in which each priest founded a Lodge.

On these Flags, are inscribed in abbreviated characters, the mottoes, "Obey Heaven, Walk righteously,"(64) and "Exterminate the Chheng,"(65) or, "Overturn the Chheng, restore the Beng."

The flags are, Black, Red, Yellow or Carnation colour, White, and Green, (or Azure blue); all have a pennon with suitable inscription, and before inserting each in the Tau, the Sien Seng recites an appropriate verse.—*c. g.*

The first, or Black Flag of Hok-Kien.

"The black flag of Hok-Kien has the precedence."

"In Kam-Siok (Kan-Suh) they also associated together, and laid a foundation."

"The "Beng" conferred on the Lodge, the title of "Blue Lotus Hall."

"So the whole 13 provinces shall guard the Imperial domains."

(2) The Flags of the five horse dealers* or "Tiger Generals,"(66) Lim-eng-Chhiauh,(67) Li-sek-ti,(68) Go-thien-seng,(69) Tho-pit-tat,(70) and Ang-thai-sui,(71). These flags are of the same colour and description as those of the five ancestors. On each is the name of the General, and the Province, Kansuh, Kwang-si, Sze-chuan, Shan-si, or Kiang-si, in

* For a full and minute description of the Flags &c., see Schlegel—pp. 33—46.

§ Now divided into Hu-Nan, and Hu-Peh.

54 蕉	58 洪錢	62 胡德帝	66 五虎將	70 必達
55 芋	59 蔡德忠	63 李色開	67 林永超	71 洪太歲
56 李	60 方大洪	64 川大丁首	68 李色智	
57 桔	61 馬招興	65 收滅青	69 吳天成	

which provinces the horse-dealers established subordinate Lodges.

(3) The flags of the Five elements; (72) Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth, White, Green, Black, Red, and Yellow.

(4) The flags of the cardinal points; East, green, West, white, South, red, North, black.

(5) The Four Season flags; Spring, green, Summer, red, Autumn, white, Winter black.

(6) The flags of Heaven, Earth, the Sun and Moon, Azure, Yellow, Red, and White.

(7) The seven stars, (73) eight diagrams, (74) Golden Orchid (75) flags, and the standard of the "Victorious brotherhood," green, yellow, red, and scarlet.

(8) The four red flags of;—the elder brother, Ban-hun-leong,* (76) Sien Seng, Tan-kin lam, (77) the Sien Hong, Thien-iu-ang, (78) and the General of the main body, Thun-thien-huai (79).

(9) The yellow umbrella; (80).

(10) The Warrant Flag for the Leader of the Armies (81).

(11) The Spirit Tablet "of the five ancestors" (82); on the left of which are inserted, the warrant flags, the "precious sword," (83) a pair of scissors, a swan-pan, (84) and the "precious mirror." (85).

On the right of the Tablet, are the sword-sheath, foot measure, small scales and weights, the "four precious things of the library," (86), viz. pen, ink, inkstone, and white paper fan,—also, there are five hanks of each colour of silk thread, white, yellow, red, green, and black.

(12) A model of the real, "Ang Hoa Teng" (87), with its three doors; in a kind of turret above the central door is the inscription, "By Imperial, (or Sacred) Command" (88)—The side-doors have inscribed on them a pair of parallel sentences, altogether containing 16 characters, each having the radical "sui," or water, added (89).

"Here is the place where "Tat chung,* the first Buddhist

* See Paper No. 1 S. A. S. Journal, June 1878. p. 80.

72 五行	77 陳近南	82 五祖	87 紅花亭
73 七星	78 天祐洪	83 寶劍	88 聖旨
74 八卦	79 敦天懷	84 箕盤	89 彗
75 金蘭	80 黃涼傘命	85 寶鏡	
76 萬雲龍	81 三軍師	86 書房四寶	

priest who ever received an official title, is buried; this spot belongs to the "Ang" family."

Before the "Pavilion" doors on each side, are a piece of touchwood, and a "Jewelled Emperor"†(90) lamp. In front of these, is the "nine storied precious pagoda (91).

Two charms are pasted on the front of the "Peck-measure," and the "Tau" is then elevated, and placed on the West side of the Altar, the Sien-Seng repeating the following stanza.

"We have newly established the City of Willows."

"And the heroes of 'Ang' are assembled to-night."

"Shields and Spears are piled up high."

"Overturn Chheng and then restore the Beng."—(Schlegel.)

On the Altar, in front, or to the East of the "Tau," are placed 5 cups of Tea, 5 cups of Wine, 5 bowls of Rice, 5 pairs of chop-sticks, the 3 sacrificial meats, Pork, fowl, and duck, 1 paper of tobacco, 1 paper of tea, 7 Lamps for the seven Stars, and 1 pair of large red candles. In front of these, is the "precious censer,"(92) in which are five stalks of grass,—and a purifying charm.

The Altar thus being arranged, the Sien-Seng goes outside the "Ang Gate," and calling over the names of the candidates, explains to them the origin and objects of the Society, by reciting the history of the subjugation of the Western Eleuths, as described in my last paper.

On the occasions on which I have been present at the meetings of Lodges, the master has further addressed his hearers, in the following manner:—

"Many of our oaths and ceremonies are needless, and obsolete, as under the British Government there is no necessity for some of the rules, and the laws of this country do not allow us to carry out others; the ritual is however retained for old custom's sake.

"The real benefits you will receive by joining our Society, are, that if outsiders oppress you, or in case you get into trouble, on application to the Headmen, they will in minor cases take you to the Registrars of Secret Societies, the Inspector General of Police, and the Protector of Chinese, who will certainly assist you to obtain redress; in serious cases, we will assist you towards procuring Legal advice."

Although this kind of address was no doubt intended

* See "Journal" June 1878 pp. 82 & 84.

† "Giok-Hong" a deity of the "Sung" dynasty.

for my benefit, it really describes the way in which most of the Societies in Singapore manage their affairs, and certainly quarrels nowadays, only arrive at any magnitude when the Head-men are helpless and incompetent.

The majority of the principal office-bearers of the Singapore Societies, honestly desire to keep their men in order, and themselves out of trouble, and the quarrels which occasionally grow into small riots, would, amongst such a heterogeneous Chinese population as that of this Colony, continually occur, were there no Secret Societies in existence. There is this difference however;—under Ords. XIX of 1869, and V of 1877 we are able to exercise a wholesome control of the Chiefs of Hoeyes, while if the Secret Societies were abolished, we should have no check at all on the thousands of the disorderly class of Chinese.

In my opinion, it would be impossible to rule China by British law; much more so, the three or four hundred thousand Chinese in our Colony, who, (except a small proportion) the scum of the Empire, and coming from different Provinces, Prefectures, and Districts, of their native land, speak dialects and sub-dialects unintelligible to each other; while all are ignorant of the language and motives of the governing nation.

Our freedom,—the germs of which were brought into Britain by our English forefathers,—(in deference to Mr. Freeman I do not use the word Anglo-Saxon) has been gradually developed during more than a thousand years, at the expense of many of the noblest of our race, who have given up their lives for the good cause, in the field, and on the scaffold.

The Chinese, on the contrary, is accustomed from infancy to lean upon, or to dread, some superior and ever present power, either in the shape of his Government, his clan, or the village elders. I do not think any persons will say that they find anything of the sort in our complicated, and to the Chinaman, (who comes here at a mature age with his prejudices and habits confirmed) inexplicable course of Law.

If some such system as those in force in the Dutch, French, or Spanish Colonies, is incompatible with our constitution and laws, I can see no other way of ruling Chinese, than by recognising the secret Societies, and by immediately commencing the training of a competent staff of officials, conversant with the Chinese language, and mode of thought, to supervise and control them.

I am aware that these views are almost diametrically opposed to those I advanced in *Frasers Magazine*, some

three years ago; but at that time I fondly hoped that the Government would see its way to exceptional and more stringent legislation, for an exceptional population. As my hopes have proved fallacious, I have been obliged to change my opinions.

Returning to the subject of this paper;—I have been informed by many old office-bearers of Societies, that 40 years ago, the punishments of the League were carried out in their integrity, and that on one occasion, some strangers (in the slang of the Society “draughts of wind”) (93) were actually beheaded for intruding on a meeting held in the jungle. As to the power of Secret Societies in those days, I have been told by a man who professes to have been in Singapore at the time, that a single member of the “Kwan-te Society,” (94) released 75 of his brethren who had been confined in Jail for some outrage.

At the present time, I am sure the Headmen dare not even use the “Red Bâton” seriously, and no Society would dare to think of making a combined effort against the Government.

After the address to the new members, the Sien Seng explains to them the various secret signs and pass-words of the Society, which are of great use to the Chinese who travel in the Native States, and through the Archipelago. At a meeting of initiation, these secrets are however only revealed in a very elementary manner; a familiar knowledge of them can only be obtained by attending Lodges of Instruction, which are frequently held, and which as in the case of all meetings, are duly notified to the Government.

Having delivered his address, and finished his instructions, the Master unbraids his queue, and puts on a suit of clothes, and a turban of pure white; the “Chhan-ôés acting as Generals are also arrayed in white costume, but have red turbans, and straw shoes laced over white stockings, something in the style of the pictures of Italian bandits.”

The Master, (Tan Kin-lan) with right shoulder bare, enters the “Ang Gate,” and passes through the “Hall of Sincerity and Justice,” and the East Gate of the “City of Willows,” (at each stage repeating an appropriate verse) until he arrives in front of the altar above the “Red-flowerly Pavilion;” here, he lights the “Jewelled Emperor Lamps,” uses the two pieces of touchwood as candles, lights the 7-star lamps, and burns a charm to drive all evil spirits from the Lodge. He then with a sprig of pomegranate and a cup

of pure water, sprinkles the altar at the four points of the compass, to cleanse the offerings from all impurity. After this, the Master takes out the five stalks of grass, and lighting them as (incense-sticks) replaces each with a profound obeisance, in the "Precious Censer" before the Tablet of the "Five Ancestors."

This being done, he lights 15 incense-sticks, and holding them between his outstretched palms, kneels down, making the following invocation to the Chinese Pantheon, and knocking his head on the ground at the mention of the names of the most august deities or spirits.

"At this moment, being the———hour, of the———day, of the———moon of the Cyclical year,———, I———, open this our———Lodge, of the Ghee Hin Society, established in———Street, in the British country of Singapore, for the purpose of expelling the 'Cheng' and of re-establishing the 'Beng' dynasty,—humbly imploring Heaven that its intentions may flow in unison with our own."

"In the 'pear garden' of the———Lodge, of the Ghee Hin Society of Singapore, our leader will this night bring new brethren to receive the commands of Heaven, and with iron livers and copper galls, to unite themselves in an oath by the mixing of blood, in imitation of the ancient worthies Lau, Koan, and Tiuⁿ."

"We are all agreed with our whole hearts, to obey Heaven and walk righteously, and to use our utmost exertions, to restore our native hills and rivers to the 'Beng' dynasty, that its heir may sit on the Imperial Throne, for ever and ever."

The Buddhist and Tauist Gods, angels, and spirits, with the five Ancestors, the five Tiger Generals, and the four ancient worthies, are then invoked to descend, at such a monotonous length, that I must refer the reader again to M. Schlegel's book for a minute account.

The invocation concludes as follows :—

"This night we pledge that the brethren in the whole universe, shall be as from one womb, as begotten by one Father, and nourished by one Mother; that we will obey Heaven and work righteousness;—that our faithful hearts shall never change. If august Heaven grants that the 'Beng' be restored, then happiness will return to our land."

After this, the Sien-Seng pours out libations of tea and wine, and sacrifices to the Standard; this being done, he

mounts his pulpit or throne on the North of the altar, and orders Ban-To-hong and Ban-To-liong to guard the "Ang Gate"; Tan-Teng-seng and Ten Ki-iu to the "Hall of Sincerity and Justice"; Go Kim-lai, and Go Hoan-ji to the East Gate of the "City of Willows." Each of these Generals is presented with a small triangular warrant flag, (95) which is stuck behind his head; and a sword or "iron plank."

Chiang Kiet-hin with the water of the "Sam-ho" or three rivers, is ordered to take up his station in front of the Pavilion; Kiet Ban-pu and Ban Bun-beng, each being armed with a sword, are sent to the "Two-planked Bridge."

The "Red Boy," (his face well rouged and a circular frame as a halo, round his head) armed with a spear, is posted at the "Red furnace," and old Chia Pang-heng is stationed to sell fruit in the "market of Universal Peace."

The guards being set, an alarm is given from the "Ang Gate," outside of which the candidates are squatted on their hams, waiting admission.

The Master, Tan Kin-lam, orders the General of the main body, Tun Thien-hoai, to go out and see the cause of the alarm; in a short while Thien-hoai returns, saying:—

"May it please the worshipful Master, the Vanguard General Thien Iu-ang is without, having the secret sign and password, and he humbly begs an interview with the Five Ancestors."

The Master having granted permission, the Sien-Hong or Vanguard, enters the gate, and having repeated the appropriate verse at each barrier, passes into the city, and falls prostrate before the altar.

The Sien-Seng then catechises him thus.

Q. "The five ancestors are above, but who is this prostrate beneath me"?

A. "I am Thien Iu-Ang of the Ko-Khe Temple"

Q. "What proof can you shew of this"?

A. "I have a verse, as a proof"

Q. "What is the verse?"

A. "I am indeed Thien Iu-Ang, bringing myriads of new troops into the City."

"That they to-night in the Pear Garden may take the oath of brotherhood."

"The whole Empire desires to take the surname Ang."

Q. "For what do you come here?"

A. "To worship the Thien Te-hui."

Q. "What proof do you bring?"

A. "I have this verse:—

"Heaven produced the Sun-Moon Lord, (Beng)
whose surname is Ang."

"But from North to South the Wind has blown him
where it listed.

"All the heroic brethern of Ang are now associated
together, to restore the rightful dynasty.

"Waiting for the dragon to appear, when they will
burst open the barriers, and overturn the Chheng."

Q. "Why do you wish to worship the Heaven and
Earth Society?"

A. "In order that we may drive out the Chheng and
restore our Beng."

Q. "Have you any proof?"

A. "I have this verse:—

"We have searched the origin, and enquired exhaus-
tively into the cause.

"And find that the Chheng took from us by force
our native land.

"Following our leaders, we will now restore the Em-
pire.

"The glory of the Beng shall appear, and the
reign of righteousness shall be established."

Q. "Do you know that there is a great and a small
Heaven and Earth Society?"

A. "Yes, the great Society originated in Heaven, and
the lesser at the waters of the three rivers (Sam Ho.)"

Q. "How can you prove this?"

A. "By the following verse:—

"Our society was originally established at the Sam
Ho.

"And multitudes of brethren took the oath of alle-
giance.

"On the day when the principles of Heaven shall be
carried out.

"Our whole Family shall sing the hymn of Uni-
versal Peace."

Q. "From whence do you come?"

A. "I come from the East."

Q. "What evidence do you bring?"

A. "I have this verse:—

"This sun and moon issuing from the East, clearly.
(Beng.)

"The army is composed of countless myriads of the Ang

heroes.”

“To overturn the Chheng and restore Beng is the duty of all good men.”

“And their sincerity and loyalty will at last be rewarded by rank and emolument.”

The catechism is continued to the length of 333 questions,* to each of which the Vanguard must give suitable answers and verses, describing the history and ceremonial of the Society. It is really astonishing to hear a clever Sien Hong give every answer and verse correctly, without referring to a Book, or requiring any assistance from the Master, who has the Ritual before him on the altar.

This part of the ceremony lasts nearly an hour, during which time the Vanguard is kneeling before the spirits of the five ancestors, who are supposed to have descended into their tablet on the altar.

The Sien-Seng now addresses the Sien-Hong as follows.

“Having thoroughly examined you, I find that by your satisfactory replies, you have proved yourself to be the real Thien Ju-ang; the five ancestors graciously accept your answers and petition, so kotow, and return thanks for their benevolent condescension.”

The vanguard having performed the “Kotow,” returns thanks as follows.

“I humbly thank the pure (Beng) spirits of our five ancestors, and beg that they will assist the Ang children to slay the Chheng. To-night having been permitted to have an interview with the five Founders, I have a firm hope that the spirits will help us to restore the great dynasty of Beng.”

The Master then says; “I now present you with this precious sword and a warrant; all the candidates who are found to be faithful and sincere, you may bring within the City to take the oath of fidelity; but those whom you may find to be traitors you must take outside the Gate, and behead.” Presenting the sword and warrant flag, he repeats this verse.

“The five Ancestors present you with this sword and commission.

“To be worn on your person while collecting material of war.

“And whilst gathering the brethren from within the Four Seas.

* See the “Hung League.”

“To bring them to the Flowery Pavilion, that they may be thoroughly instructed in their duties.”

The Sien Hong then goes outside the “Ang Gate,” saying on his way,

“The five Ancestors have bestowed on me this Flag.

“Authorising me to bring new members within the City moat.

“In a true man, sincerity and loyalty are the most important characteristics,

“You must on no account on returning home, divulge the secrets of this night.”

The new members in pairs, now enter the “Ang Gate,” kneeling down in the attitude of prayer, with burning incense-sticks between their out-stretched palms, the lighted ends towards the ground.

Generals Ban To-hong and To-liong, with their swords forming an arch over the Gate, ask their respective candidates.

1. “What is your surname and name?”

2. “In what Province, Prefecture, and District, were you born?”

3. “What is your age?”

4. “What is the cyclical character of the hour of your birth?”

These questions being satisfactorily answered, each Sin Kheh repeats the following formula after the General who prompts him.

“I now of my own free-will, enter the———branch of the Ghee Hin Society established in the British Country of Singapore, and will use my utmost endeavours, to drive out the Chheng, and establish the Beng dynasty. I promise to obey the laws of the British Government, and to follow the instructions of the Registrars of our Society, The Inspector General of Police and the Protector of Chinese. I also promise to obey the 36 articles of the Society’s oath, and to appear whenever called upon by the Head men of this Lodge. If I fail to carry out each and every particular of this my oath, may I perish, and be extinguished as this incense-stick is now extinguished.” At this the incense sticks of both new members are plunged into the earth, and extinguished. This formula is gone through three times, by each Sin-Kheh, after which the Generals say;

“What are these we hold over you?”

A. "The swords of Sincerity and Justice."

Q. "For what are they used?"

A. "To behead traitors."

Q. Which are the harder, these swords or your necks?

A. "As our hearts are truly loyal and sincere, our necks are harder than your sword." With a loud voice the Generals say, "Pass on," and the same ceremony is exactly repeated at the "Hall of Sincerity and Justice," and at the "Gate of the City of the Willows;" where, as this paper has grown to an unconscionable length, I must leave them for the present.

I am not of course blind to the fact, that the parts of the oath relating to obedience to British law, and to the Registrars of the Societies, were probably introduced in deference to the presence of official foreign visitors, though I have good reason to believe that new members are warned to obey the Colonial laws, and so keep their chiefs out of trouble.

For some years I have strongly discountenanced the use of the words "Ang-mo" or "Red haired," for "English," except in those unavoidable cases when a "freshly caught" Sin Kheh would be totally unable to understand any other term.

I have no doubt that on occasions when I have been present at meetings, special instructions have been given to the "Generals," to avoid the objectionable expression, and to use the words "Eng-kok" or "Tai-Eng-kok" for English or British, as also to give the proper titles to local Officials. It is however an unpleasant fact that the Chinese in designating foreign officials, use terms somewhat less complimentary than those to be found in the appendix to Mayers' "Chinese Government"; Inspectors of Police for instance, are called "big dogs," and the Superintendent of that body has no higher title than that of "Head of the big-dogs." Inspectors of Nuisances are called "Earth buffaloes," and so on. At the meeting above described, it was most amusing to hear the "Generals" correcting themselves when guilty of a *lapsus linguæ*, or to see the austere visage of a "Guardian" relax, as he called out to a "General" fresh from the jungle, "You fool! they will be angry if you say Ang mo; you must only say 'Eng-kok.'" As for the candidates, the effort to comprehend such words, as the Chinese equivalents for "British Government," and "Inspector General of Police," was evidently too much for them, and seemed to be an even more severe ordeal than the drawn swords under which they had to pass.

Should the members of this Society feel an interest in the further progress of the candidates, I hope on a future occasion, to describe the ceremony, including the taking of the oath, the mixing and drinking of the blood, and the beheading of the "traitorous Minister."
